



Climate change adaptation among Tibetan pastoralists: Challenges in enhancing local adaptation through policy support

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Abstract:

While researchers are aware that a mix of Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK), community-based resource management institutions, and higher-level institutions and policies can facilitate pastoralists' adaptation to climate change, policy makers have been slow to understand these linkages. Two critical issues are to what extent these factors play a role, and how to enhance local adaptation through government support. We investigated these issues through a case study of two pastoral communities on the Tibetan Plateau in China employing an analytical framework to understand local climate adaptation processes. We concluded that LEK and community-based institutions improve adaptation outcomes for Tibetan pastoralists through shaping and mobilizing resource availability to reduce risks. Higher-level institutions and policies contribute by providing resources from outside communities. There are dynamic interrelationships among these factors that can lead to support, conflict, and fragmentation. Government policy could enhance local adaptation through improvement of supportive relationships among these factors. While central government policies allow only limited room for overt integration of local knowledge/institutions, local governments often have some flexibility to buffer conflicts. In addition, government policies to support market-based economic development have greatly benefited adaptation outcomes for pastoralists. Overall, in China, there are still questions over how to create innovative institutions that blend LEK and community-based institutions with government policy making.

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Resource Description

Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Security, Temperature

Extreme Weather Event: Other Extreme Event

Extreme Weather Event (other): Snow disasters

Food/Water Security: Livestock Productivity

Temperature: Extreme Cold, Fluctuations

Geographic Feature: ☒

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Other Geographical Feature

Other Geographical Feature : Pastoral Community

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Asia

Asian Region/Country: China

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Intervention: ☒

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion, Research Article

Resilience: ☒

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified